

# THE DHS CONNECTION

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 TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
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## The DHS Connection

Tennessee Department of Human Services

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## New Child Care Web Directory Launched to Help Parents

Parents looking for child care can now find information online about providers in Tennessee. In December, First Lady Martha Sundquist joined Commissioner Metcalf in launching a new internet directory at the downtown Nashville library.

Parents can access the directory by going to the Human Services' web site at [www.state.tn.us/humanserv](http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv). The directory features a user-friendly listing of all licensed and registered child care providers in the state. Parents in all regions of the state or country can access general information, including addresses, hours of operation, type of facility and capacity. The information is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on any computer with Internet access.


TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



review basic information on the facilities within that zip code," Human Services Commissioner Natasha Metcalf said.

"We want to give parents basic information on licensed and registered providers in order to better assist them in locating and

making child care arrangements. This is another step toward that goal and we hope parents will be as excited as we are about this project."

Anyone who needs additional information about providers, such as how long they've been in business or how many complaints, if any, have been filed against them should contact their county DHS office or the Child Care Resource and Referral/Complaint Line office. The toll-free, statewide number is 1 (800) 462-8261; in the Nashville area, the number is (615) 313-4820. The Resource and Referral office is open from 7 am to 5 pm Central time, Monday through Friday to help parents without Internet access find and learn more about child care providers. 



*Mrs. Martha Sundquist and DHS Commissioner Natasha Metcalf look on as new Child Care Web Directory is unveiled.*

"Parents will be able to click on a specific county, and then a zip code, and

## DHS Recognizes Employees, Customers and Special Friends

Human Services Commissioner Natasha Metcalf named 70 individuals, groups and "special friends" as recipients of the department's Employee Recognition Awards at a special ceremony held Tuesday,

*cont. page 2*

## Almost 1,400 Licenses Revoked For Failure To Pay Child Support

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) and local child support offices took steps to revoke the driver's licenses of 1,372 people who collectively owe more than \$13 million in past due child support. The past due amounts range from about \$515 to more than \$108,000.

This action was taken after the individuals failed to pay the debts in full, make arrangements to pay, or contest the delinquent amount by filing an appeal within 20 days of receiving warning letters that were sent by certified mail.

"We warned delinquent parents to expect this action if their child support payments were not current. The lack of child support is one of the major reasons single parents and their children must rely on public assistance programs," state Human Services Commissioner Natasha Metcalf said. "It is not fair to the children, and it is not fair to taxpayers when parents do not support their children financially and emotionally."

State officials say this is the largest single group of delinquent parents to face license revocation since the state began this process in 1996.



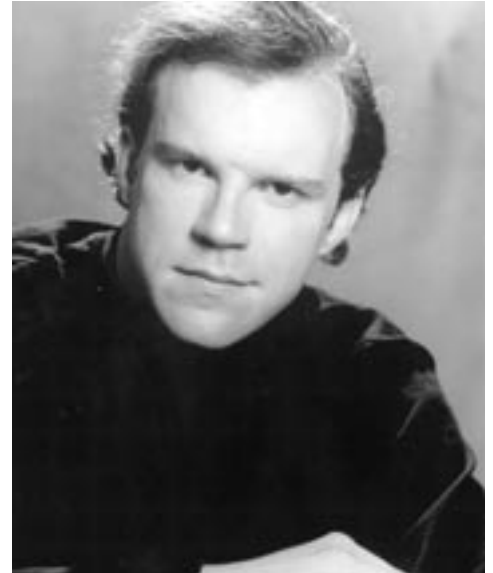
In September, DHS mailed notices to almost 11,000 delinquent parents. Many, including the 22 people who faced revocation of a professional license, contacted the local child support offices and paid the delinquent amount, made arrangements to pay, or did not sign for the certified letter. The people who did not respond after receiving their notice are those whose names have been submitted to the Tennessee Department of Safety for revocation. Approximately 96 people hold commercial driver's licenses.

"We have been working with the Department of Human Services and are fully prepared to revoke the licenses of these delinquent parents," state Safety Commissioner Mike Greene said. "It's unfortunate that it takes this sort of action to get their attention, but it's even more unfortunate that their children be made to suffer because these parents fail to meet their legal responsibilities."

Delinquent parents, who have driver's, professional licenses, or hunting and fishing licenses can face license revocation as a result of the state legislation passed and signed into law by Gov. Don Sundquist in 1996. Officials say any parent who owes at least \$500 that is 90 days or more past due could face license revocation.

For more information on the child support license revocation process, contact the local child support offices or 1-800-838-6911. [tfs](#)

## Ladd Named Director of Communications for Human Services



State Human Services Commissioner Natasha Metcalf named Paul Ladd as Director of Communications. He succeeds Patricia Harris-Morehead who was with the agency for over ten years.

"Paul's media experience will serve him well in his new position," Metcalf said. "He is bright, talented and energetic, and I know he will assume his new duties with enthusiasm and confidence."

Ladd will serve as the primary spokesman for Human Services and will supervise the media and public relations operations for the agency.

"I am honored by this opportunity to serve in state government for the people of Tennessee," Ladd said.

Prior to joining Human Services, Ladd was a free-lance reporter for Nashville Public Radio (WPLN-FM), covering state and city government. He also served as an anchor for WLAC Radio and a columnist for GCA Newspapers.

He also was the State Correspondent for Metro Networks, former columnist for *In Review* and has had several articles published in local and national magazines.

Ladd has a bachelor's degree in Mass Communications from Middle Tennessee State University. [tfs](#)

## DHS Recognizes...cont.

December 5 at the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center in Smyrna.

"The award allows me the opportunity to personally thank employees for the exemplary work they do on a daily basis. These individuals are a snapshot of the overall commitment level of DHS employees throughout the state," said Metcalf.

Awards were presented in six categories. A complete listing of all winners can be found on pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter. [tfs](#)

## A letter of Success from a Customer

...It brought tears to my eyes to see that I have really done something with my life. I used to always say to myself that I will never amount to anything in life. Well I guess I proved myself wrong. And I truly do love and miss being with you all. TRC has changed my life. TRC has helped me get a job. I work at Smart Start Child Care, and I (also) work at Ink Loan. And I am taking care of my grandmother because she can't do very much for herself. May God bless. Love you always. Please keep in touch to see how I am doing. **Nikki Smith, former student at the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center.** [tfs](#)

## DHS Customer Donna Bailey Received Special Awards From Greene/Unicoi County Cluster As Well As From District I



Donna Bailey

Donna was 21 years old and a single mother of two when she applied for welfare assistance. Now some ten years later, with the help of Families First and Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Donna graduated from the Tennessee Technology Center of Practical Nursing where she received her Licensed Practical Nurse's Certification. In addition to receiving the county and district awards, Donna also received an award at the State Recognition Program in December. Commissioner Metcalf presented the award.

## Deputy Commissioner Dedmon Receives Child Support Award

Human Services Deputy Commissioner Mike Dedmon received the Second Annual Patrick H. McCutcheon Child Support Award during the agency's annual Child Support Conference held in late Fall.

It was presented by Paul Phillips, District Attorney for the Eighth Judicial District, and current president of the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference.



*Dedmon receives Child Support Award presented by Paul Phillips during recent conference.*

## GOVERNOR Celebrates FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF FAMILIES FIRST

**First Wheels Program puts more Tennesseans on the road to work**



Governor Don Sundquist marked the fourth anniversary of Families First by highlighting an innovative car-ownership program aimed at making working parents the driving force behind their own success.

"Access to reliable transportation means access to jobs, to shopping, to education and to job training. With First Wheels we are helping families, especially those in our rural areas, knock down one of the major barriers to

self-sufficiency," Sundquist said.

First Wheels, a key factor in Phase 2 of the state's 4-year-old welfare reform initiative, provides zero interest auto loans on used vehicles (valued up to \$4,600) to eligible Families First participants. These are families that have been unable to qualify for a car loan through conventional financing.

Since First Wheels rolled into action in mid-April, 79 families in 31 counties have qualified for loans and are behind the wheel and in control of their lives. The program was phased into the state's rural counties first because of the lack of public-transportation systems in those areas. Plans are underway to expand First Wheels statewide.

Since the 1996 inception of Families First, limited transportation services, including van shuttle services, bus passes and gas reimbursements, have been available to qualified Families First participants. In 1999, additional transportation dollars became available through the federal Access to Jobs transportation grants. That money has helped expand urban public transportation routes to higher-paying manufacturing jobs in outlying areas.


Overall, the Families First program continues to be a huge success in Tennessee.

- Tennessee ranked 3rd in the nation for job placement.

- Tennessee has realized a 39 percent reduction in its cash assistance caseload.
- Of those who obtain jobs, 80.6 percent are staying on the job for at least six months.
- Over a nine-month period, those employed have received close to a 25 percent pay increase.

"Instead of continuing the cycle of dependency, we are breaking it. We are taking what once were second and third generation welfare dependents, and we are helping turn them into first generation success stories...active, productive and proud members of Tennessee's workforce," Sundquist said.

More than 36,000 families have become self-sufficient since the beginning of the program.

Officials from the Tennessee Resource, Conservation and Development Council and local Families First Advisory Council members from Hamilton and Polk counties joined the governor. Together, they presented car keys to three families who recently were approved for car loans through the First Wheels statewide revolving loan program. 



## Department of Education Unveils New Early Childhood Chart for Parents

An initiative to help parents with their children's school success was announced by the commissioner of education along with other state officials from other agencies that assisted with the project.

Commissioner of Education Vernon Coffey unveiled a new chart for parents called "Smart from the Start," that guides them through their child's development from the first three months of life to age five. "This chart guides parents on a path of good health, happiness and success in school," Commissioner Coffey said in his announcement.

The chart is being distributed free of charge to new parents in birthing hospitals across Tennessee. Charts will be available to other parents through DHS county offices, Head Start centers, Tennessee Early Intervention Services, Even Start programs, local departments of Health and Human Services, and Regional Intervention Programs (RIP).

The project, spearheaded by the Department of Education, was made possible with the help of other state agencies, including the Departments of Health, Human Services, Mental Health and the Head Start Association. Officials from these agencies joined Commissioner Coffey in the announcement made at the Children's Resource Center located at Pearl-Cohn Comprehensive Business Magnet High School in Nashville. Commissioners Fredia Watley (Department of Health) and Elisabeth Rukeyser (Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities) attended the news conference. Wanda Moore, Director of Families First Services represented Human Services at the news conference.

The chart clearly spells out what happens to a child's development at each stage and what parents can do to foster their child's learning. Each stage includes several categories such as:

**Things you can do everyday to help your child grow**

**Things your child may be able to do at each age**

**Things your baby and child may do at this age**

## Safety tips Healthy hints.



Wanda Moore, Director of Families First, is instructed on the proper way to build a tower by 1 year-old Alandra Hampton.

Federal Express, Bell South, and the hospitals of Tennessee have contributed their services to distribute the chart to the public.

Experts in the Departments of Education, Health, Human Services and Mental Health also furnished information in the chart. Along with their expertise, important toll-free phone numbers and web sites are provided to parents about health-related issues, childcare information, behavioral issues, and the Head Start program. There is also a section about automobile child restraint laws.

The Department of Education has put the entire Smart from the Start Chart online at [www.state.tn.us/education/smart](http://www.state.tn.us/education/smart). Additional information about public preschools and kindergarten programs can be accessed at the Department of Education's web site, [www.state.tn.us/education](http://www.state.tn.us/education). #6

## DHS TIDBITS...

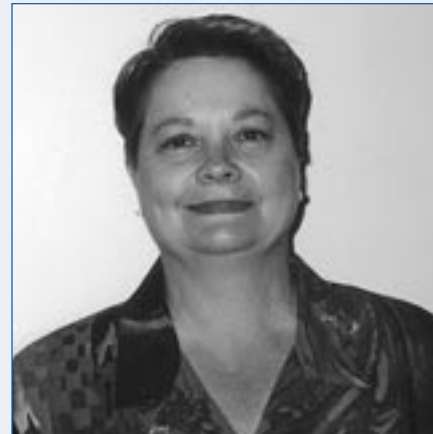
### ★ DHS Credit Union

The DHS Credit Union is now a member of the Credit Union (CU) Service Center Network. This service will allow you to make transactions on your DHS Credit Union account at participating branches. Call the credit union office for information on the location of participating credit union

branches. All you need is a photo ID and your credit union account number (your social security number will not access your account).

### ★ TRC Welcomes Susan Wilchance

Susan was appointed as the Assistant Superintendent at the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center this past summer.



Ms. Wilchance is a long-time employee of DHS. She has over 16 years of management and administrative experience as a program supervisor. She also served as a DHS Appeals Hearing Officer regarding Disability Determination Services issues. She has a master's degree in Business Administration from Middle Tennessee State University.

### ★ DHS employees attend the National Eligibility Workers (NEW) Association Training Conference in Norfolk, Virginia

DHS employees Donna Mathis and David Fowler attended the 25th Annual National Eligibility Workers



Association Conference that was held last fall in Norfolk, Virginia. The purpose of the annual conference is to improve the knowledge, skills, and overall professionalism of its members by providing information, training, and a network of service and support. "I toured the Virginia Department of Social Services' Norfolk office and their physical set-up is very similar to ours, as well as the TANF program being close to our Families First program. However, it appears to me that we are far ahead of Virginia and the rest of the

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## Tidbits...cont. from page 4

country with our Family Services Programs that we offer our customers in Families First," said David Fowler.

NEW is the only national organization dedicated to improving the well-being of all eligibility professionals. Over 500 people throughout the country attended this conference. "Meeting people who do the same job in other states was a wonderful experience. Most of those experiences made me feel very proud to work for Tennessee," said Donna Mathis.

Various workshops are offered in areas pertaining to improving performance. "The first workshop I chose was 'Casework with Compassion,' which was kept as a reminder to me that it was unrealistic to expect all clients to overcome dependencies and transition to self-sufficiency without some setbacks. When those setbacks occur, I must remember not to take it personally but keep my eye on the prize so that I can help my customer do the same," Mathis said.

### ★ Audrey Timberlake Receives Award for Massive Systems Improvement

Audrey Timberlake, who is a part of the Division of Administrative Services' Information Systems Staff, received the prestigious "Outstanding Information Systems Agency Award" for her innovative improvement to the ACCENT Daily Social Security Administration Mass Change Project.

Timberlake recognized that the functionality of the system depends largely on the case-worker's ability to access data, interpret it and enter it into the system. Even with the best intentions, the possibility of human error was high.

Timberlake developed a new sub-system that completely frees the worker from manually entering changes from the Social Security Administration. These changes are now automatically applied to cases and adjusted appropriately and the customers receive a notice detailing the result. The need for thousands of manual actions and the potential for errors have been eliminated.



Audrey Timberlake

### ★ NewsChannel 5 visits Gallatin TVTC

Talk of the Town, one of Nashville's top midday talk shows, visited the Tennessee Vocational Training Center in Gallatin to tape a portion of their daily show. The Gallatin site assists Sumner Cottage Products with packaging hand made products, that is shipped across the country. Co-host Meryll Rose, interviewed Norlena York, a Rehabilitation Assistant, about the programs at the TVTC and the many clients they serve.

There are 18 TVTCs located statewide. These centers provide vocational evaluation, training work adjustment and job placement to disabled



Talk of the Town co-host, Meryll Rose visited the Gallatin TVTC. Pictured: (l to r) Suzanne Hilgadiack and Deshia Batiste of TVTC.



Tennesseans, which aids in preparation in entering or re-entering the labor market.

Meryll Rose talks to the Transition School to Work and adult clients at the Gallatin TVTC.



# 2000 DHS Employee Recognition Winners

## COMMISSIONER'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

The Commissioner's Award for Excellence is the highest award that a DHS employee can earn. Recipients of this award have demonstrated an exceptional attitude, are flexible in the face of change, and creative and extraordinary in their endeavors to accomplish DHS' mission.

*Dan Cameron* - State Office (Top Winner)  
*Cleo Bailey* - Knox County  
*Rita Bowman* - District 1 - Johnson City  
*Star Castle-Warren* - Sullivan County  
*John Dixon* - Smyrna TRC  
*Kathy Eddie* - State Office  
*David Fowler* - Davidson County

*Curtis Green* - Shelby County  
*Dan Leonard* - District 1 - Knoxville  
*Faye Mabry* - Clay County  
*Judy Marley* - Shelby County  
*Wanda McClard* - State Office  
*Shelia Pierce* - Campbell County  
*Sara Travis* - Smyrna TRC

*Ivis Vance-Perkins* - District 1 - Johnson City  
*Jean Ward* - Smyrna TRC  
*Darryl Washington* - Cheatham County  
*Denise Weismuller* - Cumberland County

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## WINNER'S AWARD

The Winner's Award is given to DHS customers or former customers who have overcome tremendous obstacles in their efforts to succeed in becoming self-sufficient.

*Donna Bailey* - Unicoi County  
*Joyce Berry* - Monroe County  
*Reginald Dawson* - Shelby County  
*Robin King* - Sullivan County

*LaDonna Knight* - Hamblen County  
*Melissa Parrott* - Rutherford County  
*Jonathan Lewis* - Cheatham County  
*Deborah Williams* - Cumberland County



## SPECIAL FRIENDS OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Special Friends of the Department Award is given to individuals and groups from other State agencies or the private sector who have demonstrated their goals are consistent with our mission.

*Glenn Barr* - Madison County  
*George Fehrmann* - Williamson County  
*Susie Flood* - Obion County  
*Noah Jaffe* - Putnam County  
*Liesa Jenkins* - Sullivan County  
*Lee Miller* - Carter County  
*Lindsey Raye Poore* - Union County  
*Veta Sprinkle* - Knox County

*Christopher Vaden* - Cumberland County  
*Jo Wright* - Cheatham County  
District 1 APS Case Consultation Team  
Carter County Contract Staff  
Department of General Services - State Postal Services  
Shelby County Volunteer Support Committee  
Tennessee Resource Conservation and Developmental Councils  
Traumatic Brain Injury Contract Staff



## LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Leadership Award was created to recognize employees in management roles who have exhibited the leadership qualities necessary to encourage, implement and support the principles of quality management.

*Frank Huscroft* - Washington County  
(Top Winner)  
*Sara Hollowell* - Greene County

*Donny King* - State Office  
*Steve Neece* - State Office  
*Mona Overstreet* - TN Rehab Center



## SPEAKERS' AND COMMISSIONER'S AWARD

The Speakers' and Commissioner's Award was created by a joint resolution of the Tennessee General Assembly to acknowledge excellence in field supervision in DHS.

*Sandra Shepherd* - Cookeville TVTC  
(Top Winner)  
*Colene Conover* - Sullivan County

*Roy Garvin* - Washington County  
*Gemma Hite* - Hamblen Office  
*Dennis Strange* - Jefferson County



## EXCELLENCE IN ATTAINMENT OF DEPARTMENT'S MISSION

The Excellence in Attainment of Department's Mission is awarded to teams, work units, sections, or entire offices that have succeeded in clearly focusing on customers in meeting one or more of DHS' objectives and priorities.

Families First Policy Unit and Families First Services Unit  
(Top Winner)  
Cannon and DeKalb County Staff  
Child Support Research Team  
Claiborne, Grainger, and Union Tri-County Cluster  
Cookeville TVTC Staff  
Disability Determination Services Training Unit  
Disability Determination Services Memo Book Committee  
District 1, 2, 3, and 4 Adult Protective Services Supervisory Team  
Fiscal Services - Tennessee Business Enterprises Section

Hawkins County Support Staff  
Shelby County Child Care Subsidy Program Team  
TANF Federal Reporting Team  
Trousdale County Family Assistance Staff  
Unicoi County DHS Staff  
Union City Rehabilitation Team  
Washington County Family Assistance Staff  
Wilson County Family Assistance Staff  
Melissa Mullins & Elizabeth Stafford